A "Scenario" For Nuclear War On China, See Page 4

Deep, Dark Military Secret

Take the howls about General Abrams' famous "news embargo" for example . . . this supposedly wicked embargo evidently left Hanoi utterly uncertain about where the blow would come. *—Joseph Alsop's column February 10*

On Saturday, with the operation under way in the north since the early hours, the supposedly secret troop movements were being openly discussed in Saigon. One American soldier in Saigon for the day remarked that he had heard that the South Vietnamese were planning to invade Laos. "Where did you hear that?" he was asked. "The mama-san who cleans my hootch told me," he said. *—Ralph Blumenthal from Saigon, New York Times, Feb 5*

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From Body Count To Chicken Count

The official U.S. Air Force History of the Korean War disclosed that as enemy ground fire improved, "we were," in the words of the Fifth Air Force's director of operations, "trading B-26s for trucks in a most uneconomical manner."* It is again timely to recall that though we had full command of the air we could not prevent the reoccupation of North Korea by Communist Chinese volunteers nor choke off their supply lines, just as the far more intense bombardment of the Ho Chi Minh trail has failed to cut off the enemy's supply lines in Vietnam. The balance sheet of planes lost as against the cost of trucks destroyed was pretty lopsided in the Korean war, and is far more lopsided now when warplanes are several times more expensive. We wonder how the balance sheet will look some day in the Laotian "incursion" where the anti-aircraft fire is formidable and the helicopter losses heavy. An early triumph was the announcement that our side had captured 2,000 chickens and ducks. When helicopters cost from a half million upward (the Cheyenne, before it was cancelled, was figured at $3 to $4 million) it takes a lot of poultry to compensate for one helicopter. You could buy enough chickens to feed the whole South Vietnamese army for the price of one "Huey".

Disturbing Military Arithmetic

In the Laotian invasion, we are trying a hazardous operation on the cheap. General Westmoreland and Ambassador Bunker had been talking to visiting newspapermen since 1967 about an operation to cut the Ho Chi Minh trail (see among other such reports, Henry Brandon in the London *Sunday Times* Feb. 14). But they estimated that they would need at least three U.S. divisions. That would be some 60,000 men. The South Vietnamese army has mustered 20,000 men for the invasion. Though these are said to be its very best, can 20,000 ARVN do the job for which Westmoreland wanted at least 60,000 U.S. troops? The air support we're giving ARVN we would, of course, have given our own troops, too. Under the circumstances, it is easy to understand why the ARVN troops are moving so slowly into that dense and tangled mountainous jungle region. The murk of censorship is heavy but there are breaks through which one can see. The latest issue of *Newsweek* (dated Feb. 22 but available Feb. 15) said for example that despite "slow-going" a 10,000-man ARVN force had "managed to push all the way to the village of Tchepone—the enemy's main supply base in all of Southern Laos." But that same day's *New York Times* quoted ARVN's military spokesman in Saigon as saying "The deepest point of our advance into Laos is now around 20 kilometers (12 miles) east of Tchepone."

Twelve miles from Tchepone is 13 miles from the border, and 13 miles seems to be the limit of range of the U.S. artillery which has been covering the ARVN advance from the Vietnamese side. That same day's *Washington Post* carried an AP dispatch saying that ARVN supply convoys "were remaining south of the border, the third successive day without a border crossing." This led, the AP reported, "to speculation that the North Vietnamese had cut Highway 9 behind the advancing South Vietnamese tanks and armored personnel carriers." This helps us to understand what Vice Premier Ky meant when he talked in Saigon about the danger of a Dien Bien Phu. Heavily armed, road-bound conventional troops, strung out along a narrow jungle road through mountain passes can be sitting ducks for a guerrilla force which looks for weak spots where it can achieve tactical surprise and local superiority, whenever a bit of bad weather hampers air support. These are classic guerrilla tactics and fear of them may explain why two leading hawks on the Senate Armed Services Committee were less than exuberant after Laird briefed the committee on the Laotian invasion Feb. 9. Both Senators Stennis and Jackson "warned [John W. Finney in the *New York Times* Feb. 10]

(Continued on Page Two)

Maybe He's Only Trying To Scare Hanoi—He Certainly Scares Us

Q. South Vietnamese leaders in recent days have indicated that perhaps an invasion of North Vietnam might be necessary, coupled with invasion of Laos. Will the United States back such an invasion?

Secretary Laird: I don't care to comment on possible future military operations, possible future POW rescues; those particular types of military operations. I do not believe that as Secretary of Defense I should be involved in speculation.

—News Conference, Phoenix, Arizona, Feb. 12.

There couldn't be a coyer way to encourage the speculation Laird says he wants to avoid.

*** p. 425, Robert F. Futrell, *The U.S. Air Force in Korea: 1950-53*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1967.**

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Taking On Long-Range Strategic Liabilities For Short-Range Tactical Gains...

that the South Vietnamese troops might run into what Senator Stennis described as 'real trouble'." Should that "real trouble" threaten the destruction of the ARVN invaders, would Nixon leave them to their fate or—with or without a special appeal to Congress—send U.S. combat troops to the rescue?

Another "Quickie" Gimmick

The Laotian invasion will, I believe, go down in history as another of those quickie "gimmicks" by which we—and the French before us—hoped to win an unwinnable war. If the ARVN troops merely make a quick stab into the Ho Chi Minh trail, destroy some supplies and get out while they can, it will make little difference even on short-term. If ARVN settles down to stay until the end of the dry season, there are a lot of bloody ambushes ahead. We tend to forget that just as declining U.S. casualties have muffled protest in our own country, rising ARVN casualties in the wake of "Vietnamization" have fueled a growing anti-war movement in Saigon. The cost to ARVN of the Laotian adventure must add to the unrest in South Vietnam. A pro-peace force has grown up between the NLF and the Thieu regime and major reverses in Laos could bring it into the streets. One contingency for which our military may have plans is the possibility of a popular uprising against the Thieu regime. It would be ironic if the invasion of Laos culminated in a re-invasion of South Vietnam.

In the Laotian invasion, as in the Cambodian, Nixon is taking on long-range strategic liabilities in return for short-range tactical gains. These impatient gambles can only serve to widen and extend a war against a foe whose major asset lies precisely in his patience. The Vietnamese national revolution which began a quarter century ago will not be stopped now even if we succeed in destroying one dry season's supplies. We have widened the war and the enemy can widen it further. If the enemy responds by taking over the rest of Laos, most of it in enemy hands already, we face the prospect of serious political and military complications. We can no more let Laos be lost than we can afford to let Cambodia be lost if the ARVN troops fail in either country. The fall of Cambodia to a neutral or hostile regime would make the present blockade of Sihanoukville untenable, and turn the whole country into an enemy sanctuary. The fall of Laos would bring the war up to the borders of Thailand where we have major strategic bombing bases and the Communists have several fertile areas of economic and ethnic unrest for guerrilla movements. The Thais may pay a price for the troops they have been covertly putting into Laos in preparation for Saigon's "incursion."

Escalating to disengage has the same woozy logic as frightening the enemy into negotiating on our terms by withdrawing combat troops. The little noticed result of Nixon's latest bluff in Vietnamese poker is the first redeployment of U.S. combat troops back to the war zone. I refer to the 1,500 U.S. Marines who appeared off the DMZ Feb. 11 on ships of the 7th fleet, with artillery and tanks ready for a landing. These were elements of the Third Marine Division which operated below the buffer zone until November 1969. They were evacuated with much publicity (but only to Okinawa) in the "winding down" of a war which now seems to be winding up. Their announced purpose is to block the North Vietnamese if they counter the thrust at the Ho Chi Minh trail in the west by an invasion across the DMZ in the east, thus threatening the rear of the ARVN invaders. But what if Hanoi takes

A Laotian General's Lament

General Nouphet said that he would not attack Muong Phalane even if he could because many civilians remained behind when he withdrew his troops. For the same reason, he said, he does not want the United States Air Force to bomb there. He added: "Every time the Americans are called in to bomb, they destroy friends and not enemies." The general said that as far as Laos was concerned the war seemed nearly lost because the North Vietnamese now control about two-thirds of the country and there was no longer any place in which to seek refuge. He said he was fighting against the North Vietnamese invaders to protect his native soil and villages but not for the Americans. "If we came under the Communists, we could no longer be killed by the Communists," General Nouphet said. But, he added, if all of Laos was conquered by the Communists, the whole country might be subjected to American bombing.

—Henry Kamm from Laos, New York Times, *Feb. 6.*

Mendel Rivers' Successor Excusing My Lai: "They're Little Vietcong"

Q: Do you think that a lot of the people who were killed in My Lai were Vietcong?

F. EDWARD HEBERT [Chairman, House Armed Services Committee]: There's no doubt about it.

Q: There also is no doubt, though, isn't there, that a lot of people who were killed there were not Vietcong, couldn't possibly have been?

HEBERT: What were they doing in that village, for 25 years a Vietcong stronghold?

Q: Well, I'm talking about the women and children, though.

HEBERT: What were they doing there?

Q: Well, they were living there.

HEBERT: That place had been cleaned out several times, and they went back to the Vietcong.

Q: Right, but I mean there's no question that some of those who were killed at My Lai could not possibly have been Vietcong; they were little children, they were 1 year, 2 years old . . .

HEBERT: They were just growing up to be big Vietcong. Those little children throw grenades, you know.

Q: Yeah, but there were some children there who were 1 year old and 2 years old . . .

HEBERT: That's going into testimony which we didn't take. [Hebert was chairman of the House Subcommittee that investigated My Lai]. All we said was that Vietnamese in civilian clothes were killed, wantonly killed, unnecessarily killed. That's what we said.

Q: Those two things seem to be in conflict. On the one hand your report saying that they were unnecessarily killed, and on the other hand you're saying now that they just would have grown up to be big Vietcong.

HEBERT: I can't resolve that either . . . I've said they're little Vietcong who'll grow up to be big Vietcong.

Q: So why was their killing unnecessary?

HEBERT: You can kill, in an atrocity, unnecessarily, even the enemy. Just because you kill them doesn't mean you can slaughter the enemy.

Q: So then your real objection to the event at My Lai was not that it happened, but how it happened?

HEBERT: How it happened.

Q: The way in which they were killed, not that they were killed?

HEBERT: That's correct. I think that would be fair.

—From an interview by Scott Kaufer Feb. 5 for a Los Angeles high school paper, The Oakwood Gorilla.

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. . . The Undertow Is Toward Nuclear War On China, The Last Sanctuary

seriously Ky's talk of invading the North and regards the Marines positioned off the DMZ (and heavy bombing north of the buffer zone) as harbingers of invasion? If Hanoi strikes across the line first, or appears ready to strike, this would give Nixon an excuse to resume heavy bombing of the North. Do the Marines represent a feint for this very purpose?

As Seen From Peking

The search for a military solution to a political problem has drawn Nixon into brinkmanship, and onto a slippery slope which could lead to war with China. The quick White House reaction to Chinese alarm over the Laotian invasion shows that Nixon is well aware that this is the biggest risk of all. Ziegler's immediate statement that the invasion posed "absolutely no threat to Communist China" may soothe a confused and gullible Senate but not Peking even if Nixon means it, as we believe he does. But from the perspective of Peking, the Indochina war since we began to finance the French in 1950 has been aimed to contain China. The Thai bases were planned, long before our own military intervention, to bring China within range of nuclear bombers. China—whatever Nixon's intentions—must feel that in Laos and at the DMZ the war is moving toward its very doorstep, and with it the spectre of a nuclear attack. Imagine our alarm if the nuclear imbalance were reversed and Chinese troops in Mexico appeared to be moving up closer to the Texas border while nuclear-armed Chinese warships—and a Chinese Marine landing force—appeared off Brownsville.

Nixon is trapped by his desire to avoid "humiliation." He is caught in what the French call the "engrenage"—the gears he has set in motion. The search for one more last sanctuary to clean out for victory leads from Cambodia to Laos to North Vietnam to China itself, the ultimate sanctuary of the Vietnamese revolution, if not to the Soviet Union, Hanoi's major supplier. For unless Peking and Moscow desist, the war cannot be ended—and Peking cannot let Hanoi down without endangering its own security. *The road leads to nuclear war.* We call attention on the next page to a "scenario" for nuclear war in Asia not because we believe such action imminent but because we believe the undertow is in this direction. The No. 1 lesson of this war is that we can win it only by destroying the countries we claim to be defending from Communism. Nixon, who was ready to use nuclear weapons at Dien Bien Phu, is in command now. He is being drawn by forces ever harder to resist toward a "final solution" as horrible as Hitler's, but which this time could engulf our country and the world. This is the direction on which we are embarked, unless we turn back while we still can. Let 1914 remind us that there comes a point when the momentum is irresistible even when nobody really wants war. *Feb. 15*

The Toll Of The Suffering We Impose

We have been told our continued presence is necessary to prevent a bloodbath. How have we saved the people of Southeast Asia from a bloodbath? Let us look at Laos. Seven hundred thousand refugees have been produced as a result of war-related activities—one-fourth of the population. Of an estimated Meo population of 400,000 in 1960, at least 40 to 50 percent of the women and children have fallen as war casualties. Between 1966 and 1969, Laos suffered the highest per capita casualty rate in the world, and experienced the heaviest per square mile bombing in history. The bombing last year alone on the Plaine des Jarres has, in the words of one U.S. AID official, left "most villages and fields now almost completely ruined"

—Rep. Ryan (D.-N.Y.) in the House, Feb. 4.

CORRECTION AND APOLOGY: Though the Spanish Embassy and the Washington society pages listed them as present, neither Mr. Justice and Mrs. Douglas nor Senator and Mrs. McGovern attended the reception for Juan Carlos and had no intention of doing so. We are happy to be proven wrong, and regret that Sen. and Mrs. Kennedy were present to honor the Fascist dictator's chosen successor.

We Hate To Disillusion Alsop But The Lao Generals Are Acting Like Chiang's Did

If their [North Vietnamese] unique lifeline is in fact severed as planned, they will get almost no replacements, or ammunition or other military supplies. In South Laos, where virtually no food is locally available, they will also get none of the rations they need from the north. The catastrophic potential should therefore be obvious.

—Joseph Alsop's column, February 10.

The South Vietnamese incursion into the Ho Chi Minh Trail area near Sepone in the north sector of the Laos panhandle will not cut off the North Vietnamese from food supplies, well informed American sources here say. This is because between 7,000 and 10,000 tons of rice are being sold to the Communists by Lao officials further south in the panhandle, disgusted Americans say. This is enough rice to supply one North Vietnamese division with food for one year. The rice is surplus produce from Laos' 4th Military Region around Pakse.

Sources allege Prince Boun Oum himself, the traditional rightist ruler in the area, may be implicated and named one of his associates, Boun Lieng, and the commander of the garrison at Paksong town on the Bolovens Plateau, Gen. Kong Vongnarat, as likely involved in the sales to the Reds. Americans say the U.S. Agency for International Development in Vientiane is well aware of the rice sales but unable to do much because high ranking people are involved. The AID people, in an effort to stop the traffic, offered to buy the rice surplus at $48 per ton, $18 more than the usual to cover rice delivery from Pakse to rice-short northern Laos.

AID planned to use the rice to feed CIA-supported guerrillas and tribal refugees in northern Laos. However, Pakse officials and merchants tried to make a double profit. They continued to sell the Pakse surplus to the enemy and at the same time purchased cheap rice in northeast Thailand, eliminating the delivery costs while getting the high price of $48 per ton from AID. The scheme came apart when AID was informed of the plot in an anonymous letter.

Military Region 4 Commander Gen. Phasouk, close Lao associates say, is aware of the rice traffic but he believes Kong is less greedy than other general officers, therefore as long as he remains in his post less rice will reach the enemy than might be the case. Middle level American officials apparently are tired of the dealings, however. They fail to see why U.S.-supported officials more interested in money, should get away with feeding Hanoi troops who almost certainly will be engaged against U.S. troops in South Vietnam.

Although the Americans know what's going on, they say there's little proof. Gen. Phasouk forbids Americans to travel on Paksong Road, claiming it is insecure. Paksong Road, however, has been hit only once in the past two years by the Reds and some Americans believe the Lao don't want U.S. AID officials to see the rice traffic.

—Tammy Arbuckle from Vientiane Wash. Eve. Star *Feb. 9.*

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A Morally Imbecile "Scenario" From Herman Kahn's Unthinkable Think Tank

By Edmund O. Stillman*

Unable to solve its dilemmas in South Vietnam and Cambodia, the United States invades North Vietnam with an amphibious force of four to five divisions. The intention is to seize the Hanoi-Haiphong area, driving the North Vietnamese government from its capital and thereby destroying its prestige as a legitimate government in the North and as the sponsor of a "winning" insurrection in the South. The invasion succeeds beyond expectations and the authority of the North Vietnamese governmnt begins to disintegrate. The Communist Chinese, led by a militant faction, intervene. As in Korea, the Chinese score important successes in the initial phase, and U.S.-South Vietnamese forces suffer major reverses.

A One-Megaton Bomb Over Peking

The United States considers alternative policies. Because of the prevailing political climate in the United States and the weight of man-power and material needed, the alternatives of fighting a localized conventional campaign against the Chinese in Vietnam or of a conventional invasion of China itself are rejected. United States conventional air power is judged (rightly or wrongly) insufficient wholly to interdict logistics into North Vietnam or to wipe out Chinese industry. Instead, the United States detonates a one-megaton weapon at 500,000 feet above Peking as a demonstration, together with limited nuclear attacks on selected military targets. Simultaneously the United States begins round-the-clock broadcasts and drops leaflets proclaiming that Chinese nuclear facilities and air defenses have been destroyed.

With such attacks, the United States is primarily disarming the enemy capacity to harm the United States and targeting the morale of the Chinese people, in an attempt to unhinge Chinese society. It is felt that, subjected to these attacks, the Chinese people may bring irresistible pressure against the regime to compromise with the United States; or, alternatively, acting out of fear, destroy the regime; or, finally, destroy the regime not so much through purposeful revolution as simply by withdrawing support, Chinese society dissolving into anarchy. The assertion that nothing stands between the Chinese people and annhilation but U.S. self-restraint is intended to demonstrate the helplessness of the leaders and, thus, to destroy any charismatic authority of the Communist party—which is perhaps thereby shown to have lost whatever it has left of the "Mandate of Heaven."

The United States then announces the forthcoming destruction (within, say, 48 hours) of one of ten (named) cities, simultaneously announcing sanctuary areas. The announcement of ten likely cities is intended to augment the quality of terror and to drive large segments of the population into motion, disrupting or contributing to the disruption of the governmental structure and authority. The announcement of sanctuary areas is intended both as a humanitarian measure and as an important contribution to U.S. peace of mind in the aftermath.

*** From an article in the November 1970 *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Stillman is director of the European division of Herman Kahn's Hudson Institute and a consultant to the Defense Dept. and the Atomic Energy Commission.**

The Root Problem And The Root Mentality

The root problem of the Nixon Doctrine is its abiding commitment to the containment of China . . . Yet it also intends to scale down our conventional military capability . . . If we maintain . . . present Asian commitments, while adopting budget-constrained strategies, we risk a future defeat or stalemate or we allow ourselves to be moved toward reliance on nuclear weapons.

—Earl C. Ravenel, Director of the Asian Division (Systems Analysis), Office of the Secretary of Defense 1967-69, in the Jan. 1970 issue of Foreign Affairs.

If a President does decide to launch a nuclear warhead against Vietnam—he will not lack willing hands to carry out his orders. This is the unsurprising impression I gained while wandering through the Pentagon . . . None of these men bluntly urged the use of nuclear bombs in the current war, but a number of them had a good deal to say about our failure to do so in the Korean war when the hordes of Chinese troops were crossing the Yalu river . . . One civilian official told me, "If the Chinese invaded Vietnam, it would be a national disgrace if we didn't clobber them with nukes. And another thing—this time the Russians wouldn't mind it." *—Daniel Lang,* The New Yorker, *Jan. 9.*

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